

CHURCH AND HOME

UNIVERSITY CONGREGATIONAL
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST



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“Taking Love to Hard Places”: a Vision for the Road

What is University Congregational United Church of Christ? Who are we? How is God calling us? Challenging us? What is the Good News and the Joyful Song that we know and that God has given us to share with the world?

During the past year, our church leadership has been looking very intentionally at these questions. We have invited us as a congregation to reflect on who we hear God calling us to be. We have learned a lot:

- We like challenges.
- We want to make a difference in the world.
- We are willing to take on "the hardest stuff."
- Sometimes we get overwhelmed with the "work" and forget about the grace and joy of our faith.
- We honor people wherever they are—believers, seekers and doubters.
- We are looking for a faith big enough for all our questions and all our paths.
- We see "love" at the center of what we do, and peace and justice work as an outgrowth of that love.

Where do our passions come together? What do we hear at the heart of who we are and who God is calling us to become? We have heard a call: "Taking love to hard places." As a church, we have a long history of bringing the gospel to bear on the hardest issues of our day, and taking significant risks for the sake of our ministry. We have felt proud of who we are and how God is using us at such times. We are a large congregation with many resources. We want to make a difference today. We want to be a church that is about risk and passion and joy.

This fall, we want to invite us as a congregation into dreaming about this vision for our future together. How would we be different as a church if "taking Love to hard places" was at the heart of our life together? Where would we go? What would we do? How would we make that vision sing in our ministries together, in our city and in the world?

*taking Love
to hard places*

We have heard a call at the heart of who we are as church, and this fall we want to invite you to listen to that call with us. We will be inviting us to reflect on this vision in a fall preaching series rooted in the song that is at the heart of Paul's ministry, 1 Corinthians 13. We will explore the themes of this vision in classes this fall for adults and youth.

We will be inviting us to share and dream together about this vision at a series of gatherings this fall beginning with a "Congregational Conversation" following worship on **Sunday, Oct. 7** where the leadership team will discuss the vision and its implications for leadership and staffing. We look forward to hearing from you at these gatherings: **Oct. 7, 11:30 a.m.; Oct. 21, 11:30 a.m.; Oct. 28, 9 a.m.; Nov. 11, 11:30 a.m.; and Dec. 2, 9 a.m.**

In addition, the leadership team welcomes hearing from you individually, and they and lay leaders will be making opportunities this fall for boards, committees and small groups to reflect and dream about the vision together.

In the church office, we have materials related to the vision and other interim tasks that we have been engaged in during the past year including reports from the Interim Advisory Committee; the interim minister, George Meier, and a leadership team response to the reports and the recommendations of the Long-Range Staffing Committee. It has been an exciting and growing year for us as a congregation. We are blessed for the many leaders in our church who have led us during this time.

"Behold, I am doing a new thing," the prophet Isaiah sings. And it is true: God is doing a new and joyful thing in our life together. Join us this fall to dream and sing of this new way together.

Your leadership team,
David Anderson, Catherine Foote, Peter Ilgenfritz
and Don Mackenzie